

*Melancon: We Must Honor Our Promises to Louisiana's Veterans*  
August 31, 2010

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Tonight, Congressman Charlie Melancon (LA-03) commented on President Obama's address to the nation on the end of combat operations in Iraq.

**"For over seven years, Louisiana's military men and women have served bravely in Iraq, working to bring peace and stability to the region and protect Americans from another terrorist attack,"** said Rep. Melancon. **"As the last combat troops begin returning home, a grateful nation must recommit to providing every veteran with the care and benefits they were promised and that they deserve.**

**"As our troops return home and transition to their new lives as civilians, we must make sure they have the tools to succeed. Through the New GI bill, which I proudly supported, our Iraq and Afghanistan veterans can receive a full, four-year college education. Our military men and women and their families have made enormous sacrifices to defend our country, and I will never stop working to honor our promises to Louisiana's veterans."**

Congressman Melancon has a strong record in Congress of supporting veterans, servicemembers, and their families. He supported the New GI Bill, passed in 2008, which restored the promise of a full, four-year college education for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. Congressman Melancon also supported provisions in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (the "Recovery Act") that provided a tax credit for hiring unemployed veterans and helped disabled veterans weather the economic downturn with tax benefits.

Congressman Melancon has consistently voted for veterans and defense funding bills, including the largest increase in Veterans Affairs funding in the agency's history, to ensure that troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan receive the best health care available. Since January 2007, 145 new community-based veterans' outpatient clinics have been opened, thanks to the 70 percent increase in funding for veterans' health care and benefits Congressman Melancon has voted for over the past four years. These investments have also supported hiring over 10,000 new claims processors, 3,389 new doctors and 14,316 new nurses, and opening 92 new veterans' centers to serve over 6 million U.S. veterans.

Congressman Melancon has also supported reform legislation that will guarantee timely and reliable veterans funding, and voted to give U.S. troops a pay raise in both 2008 and 2009.

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